



MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MERCANTILE NEWS



The Museum Store, Helena, Montana

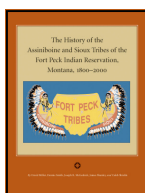
April-June 2008

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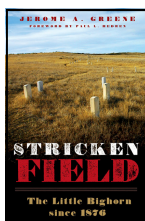
Just Off The Freight Train

Let's get right to the good stuff, shall we. Listed below are some of the new and exciting books and merchandise lining the shelves and just in time for spring:

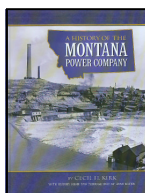
Short List of New Books:



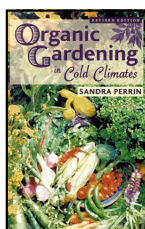
• *The History of the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, Montana 1800-2000* by David Miller, Dennis Smith, Joseph R. McGeshick, James Shanely, and Caleb Shields (paper, 536 pgs, 100 b&w photos, \$39.95)



• *Stricken Field: The Little Bighorn Since 1876* by Jerome A. Greene (cloth, 384 pgs, 100+ illus., maps, \$34.95)



• *A History of the Montana Power Company* by Cecil H. Kirk (cloth, 446 pgs, photos, illus., \$49.95)



• *The Cowgirl's Cookbook* by Jill Charlotte Stanford (paper, 112 pgs, photos, illus., \$9.95)

• *Organic Gardening in Cold Climates* by Sandra Perrin (paper, 160 pgs, \$12.00)

• *Zealous in All Virtues: Documents of Worship and Culture Change, St. Ignatius Mission, Montana, 1890-1894* edited by Robert J. Bigart (paper, 324 pgs, \$19.95)

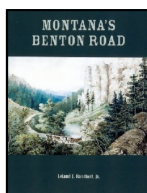


• *Civic Tourism: The Poetry and Politics of Place* by Dan Shilling (paper, 118 pgs, \$12.00)

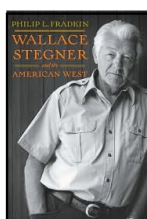
• *A Pretty Village: Documents of Workshop and Culture Change, St.*

Ignatius Mission, Montana 1880-1889 edited by Robert J. Bigart (paper, 332 pgs, \$19.95)

• *The Chichi Hoochoo Bogeyman* by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve (paper, 64 pgs, illus., \$9.95) NOTE: listed on Montana's IEFA (Indian Ed For All) reading list



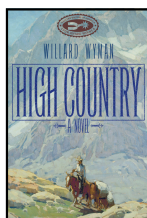
• *Montana's Benton Road* by Leland J. Hanchett, Jr. (paper, 224 pgs, photos, \$24.95)



• *Yellowstone Ghost Stories: Spooky tales from the world's first national park* by Shellie Larios (paper, 112 pgs, \$9.95)

• *Wallace Stegner and the American West* by Phillip L. Fradkin (cloth, 369 pgs, \$27.50)

• *Packin' In On Mules and Horses* by Smoke Elser and Bill Brown (paper, 168 pgs, \$18.00)



• *High Country* by Willard Wyman (paper, 368 pgs, \$16.95)

• *Washita: The U.S. Army and the Southern Cheyennes, 1867-1869* by Jerome A. Greene (paper, 304 pgs, illus., maps, \$19.95)

Short List of New Merchandise:

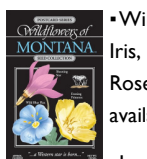


• *Yellowstone Bees Hand & Foot Balm* (Bozeman)

• *Swarovski Crystal Suncatchers* in a variety of styles, colors adorned with

beautiful antique beads and gemstones (Phillipsburg)

• *Candles from Montana Candleworks* in a variety of scents and colors (triple scented, natural soy wax, cotton wicks) (Dillon)



• *Wildflower seed packets* including Wild Iris, Blue, Lupine, Indian Paintbrush, Wild Rose, Blue Columbine (other varieties available)

• *Jewelry and watercolor notecards* from Nancy Blatnik (Great Falls)

• *Signed art cards, postcards and bookmarks* from local photographer and artist Kathe LeSage (Wolf Creek)

Please feel free to stop in for a visit with me, Gordon and JoAnn, and see all of the great books and products that your Museum Store has waiting for you.

I'm looking forward to seeing you soon,
Sherry Jonckheere, Museum Store Manager

Coming Soon To A Shelf Near You

BOOKS:

• *Montana Place Names: From Alzada to Zortman* (MHS Press)

• *Bedside Book of Bad Girls* by Michael Rutter

• *Missoula Impressions: Montana's Five Valleys* photography by Nelson Kenter

• *Glacier National Park: The First 100 Years* by Carol W. Guthrie

• *Bad Boys of the Black Hills...And Some Wild Women, Too* by Barbara Ffifer

• *Horses That Buck: The Story of Champion Bronc Rider Bill Smith* by Margot Case

• *The American Indian: Past and Present, 6th Edition* edited by Roger L. Nichols

• *Medicinal Plants of the Mountain West* by Michael Moore

• *William Henry Jackson's "The Pioneer Photographer"* by Bob Blair

• *Jackalope Dreams* by Mary Clearman Blew

GENERAL MERC:

• *Art glass* from Goose Bay Glass, Townsend, Montana

• *BaSadi Pottery*

The Defendorf Report by Gordon Defendorf

A REVIEW OF:

*Cromwell Dixon: A Boy & His Plane
(1892-1911)*

-By Martin J. Kidston

The telling of this story came about through the author's fascination with the Continental Divide west of Helena. While hiking the MacDonald Pass area in the late 1990's, Kidston discovered a memorial to Cromwell Dixon, the first pilot to fly over the Continental Divide September 30, 1911. Kidston attempted research and found little information available but did publish an article in the Helena Independent Record commemorating the 90th anniversary of the event in September 2001. Over the next 4-5 years, Martin compiled a bit of material, primarily newspaper articles about the young man from Columbus, Ohio who with the unfailing support and backing of his widowed mother Annie Dixon and his younger sister Lulu, managed to build (and fly in 1907) in the family backyard during 1906-1907 at age 15 his first airship – "a genuine flyer". At that early industrial time, "aeronauts" balanced their craft from a "basket" 12-25 feet in length suspended below a "gasbag" filled with a mixture of hydrogen. Dirigibles, as such, comprised early aviation history until the 1908-1910 period. The Wright brothers did successfully fly a fixed wing glider at Kitty Hawk in December 1903, but the Wright's were not media savvy, preferred to stay out of the press, and thereby, for the most part went un-noticed.

By 1910-1911, aeroplanes and the daring new pilots were the highlights of State Fairs and Flying Exhibitions across the country and Cromwell Dixon, in August 1911 became the 43rd (and youngest at 19) pilot to be issued a license by the Aero Club of America. During August and September of 1911, Cromwell was flying for the Curtiss Exhibition Company in a Curtiss built "pusher" aeroplane. By now the Curtiss aeroplane had

been flown over 200,000 miles in exhibition flights and aviation meets. The "pusher" was powered by a 69hp water cooled engine, weighed 630 lbs, was capable of reaching 60mph and retailed to the public at \$3,000, for exhibition purposes only.

Cromwell arrived in Helena, Montana in late September 1911 – dazzled the crowds, including Governor Edwin Norris, with exhibition flights in his "Little Hummingbird" at the Montana State Fair. A year earlier, the first to pilot an aeroplane in Montana, JC "Bud" Mars had attempted to fly over a low point in the Continental Divide known as Mullan Pass and crashed due to severe downdrafts in the area.

Since that time, Louis Hill, president of the Great Northern Railway and other businessmen offered a prize of \$10,000 and a gold medal for the first to fly over the Continental Divide. On September 30, 1911, Cromwell Dixon took off from the Helena fairgrounds before thousands of cheering spectators, gained altitude, flew west, crossed the Continental Divide, landed at Blossberg (approximately ½ mile beyond modern day Cromwell Dixon campground at the top of MacDonald Pass) and flew back to Helena making aviation history.

Sadly, two days later on October 2, 1911 during an exhibition flight in Spokane, Cromwell encountered a downdraft while at low altitude, nose dived into a railroad embankment and was tragically killed.

With modern day development just west of the Helena Airport, a new road went in and was named "Cromwell Dixon Lane". Kidston again published a story in the IR about this daring young pilot which was noticed by a grandson of Cromwell's sister Lulu named Jeff Berry. Mr. Berry contacted Martin and shared with him known family history. The result is a local author, telling a local story, published by a local press – And that's not all. In 1978, the Helena Airport commissioned local artist/historian Bob Morgan to paint a mural depicting the

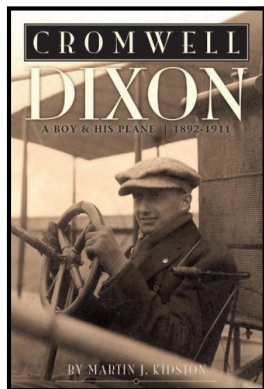
historic event. The mural titled "First Across the Divide" hangs in the lobby of the Helena Regional Airport and depicts Cromwell landing at Blossberg with a small group looking on. Ltd Edition prints are also available from the Administration office on the 2nd floor.

Cromwell Dixon – A Boy & His Plane 1892-1911 is rich with aviation history, early photos of the aeronauts, the inventors and builders and the young aviators of the early 20th century.

A fabulous book—I give it a 5-Apron Rating.



**The 5-Apron Rating system is based on a 1-apron to 5-apron range. (i.e., Gordon gives a 1-apron to those books he least recommends, a 2 to 4-apron for mediocre, average or middle-of-the-road recommendations, and a 5-apron rating for his highest recommended reads.)*



Museum Store Set To Move

Yes, you've heard it correctly. The Museum Store is moving—and actually not very far—still within the walls of the Society just one door and gallery away from where it is currently located.

With the vision of the store to maintain the integrity of the Montana Historical Society providing Montana and western related books and wares, our interior had to reflect that image. And with the help, expertise and craftsmanship of our own exhibit preparator (inhouse carpenter), Todd Saarinen our new store is a western masterpiece that will make our customers want to come back again and again.

The Store will continue to sell our time tested wares and expand to include additional Made in Montana products and Montana artists, including pottery, art glass, jewelry and Indian arts and crafts from around the state.

A Grand Opening celebration will launch the new store and is scheduled for this coming summer. Stay tuned for more details on what is sure to be an unforgettable Museum Store opening event!